My name is Cassandra Lynn Durick and I was born in the very early hours on September 5th, 1991. It was exactly 4:18 am when this bundle of joy entered the world at McGee Hospital. To my mom I am known as “Sanny”, to my dad I am known as “Princess”. When I was born my brother, Christopher, was twenty six months old and became and still is my best friend growing up. He is at college now, but he is as close as a phone call away. Enough about me for now, here is a little history of my life before “Princess” entered the world.  
 On my daddy’s side my great great grandparents, John and Ann Durick, arrived in this country “on the boat” from Slovakia. They lived on “The North Side” of Pittsburgh and raised their own pigs. My dad said his dad told him that their pigs would grow to one thousand pounds before they butchered them themselves. They had four boys and two girls in their family. Their dad died when my grandpa, Andrew Durick, was seven years old so everyone pitched in to make ends meet.  
 My Grandpa Durick met and married Dolores Baric. My Grandma “DoDo” as she was called died several years ago from Leukemia. My Grandma Dodo’s parents were Joseph and Elizabeth Baric. Grandpa Joe worked all his life and my Grandma Lizzie worked for some time for Bankus Bakery on Route 8 in Glenshaw, Pennsylvania. My Grandma Lizzie’s mom and dad arrived by boat from Croatia. Great Grandpa “DeDe” as he was known as worked at the Tannery on Herr’s Island on the Allegheny River and Great Grandma Pozar worked and retired from Heinz’s in Pittsburgh.  
 On my mommy’s side, her grandparents arrived from Ireland. My mom does not remember their names, but her dad, Robert Sherry, resides in the Brookline section of Pittsburgh. His wife, my Grandma Eileen Sherry, whom I never met, died from cancer before any of her nine grandchildren were ever born. My Grandpa Sherry’s mom and dad were named Helen and Eugene Sherry and also arrived from Ireland. Unfortunately, my mom does not remember much of anything about them. Grandpa Sherry worked for and retired from the US Postal Service and still resides in Brookline.  
 Now back to my life as Princess. I started my school career in kindergarten at the age of six. After kindergarten graduation my schooling began at Ride Road Elementary where I stayed ‘til the beginning of fourth grade. At that point I had to go to State Street Elementary. I still miss Ridge Road Elementary! Why they close such a great and amazing school is beyond me. I ended up having Mrs. Cerar as my homeroom teacher. I had a lot of my friends in that class which made it easier to adjust to being in a completely different school. I absolutely hated that school. When it came to the summer of going into fifth grade, I got switched out of State Street Elementary and went to Economy Elementary. I had Mr. Zajac as my homeroom teacher. He reminded me a lot of my dad because he was extremely funny and was always there if you needed help with anything. My favorite teacher that school year was Mrs. Staryzak, she taught us reading. I had her once before and that was in second grade. Fifth grade was one of the best school years. It was finally summertime and I was going to be in sixth grade. That summer I went to Myrtle Beach just like we always do. I finally got my card in the mail and I was assigned Mr. Espey as my homeroom teacher. I absolutely loved him; he was definitely one of the nicest teachers I’ve ever met. Sixth grade was the year I got my very first boyfriend. His name was Cody McCall. I thought that life couldn’t possibly get any better; little did I know that people are always changing. All the sixth graders ended up graduating from Economy. Mr. Somonik gave us our “diplomas”. I finally realized that I was going to be in Junior High!  
 When I entered seventh grade, Mrs. Bober was my homeroom teacher. She was an extremely quiet person. Seventh grade was the beginning of switching classes nine times a day. Now, that was something I had to get used to. I didn’t really like seventh grade so much. It was different because it was something I wasn’t quite used to yet. Eighth grade came around like no other. The classes seemed to be getting a lot harder and challenging. I realized who my true friends were that year. The one class that I absolutely could not stand that year was sewing class. After Christmas break my life changed drastically and so did my weight, but not for the better. I became extremely sick and entirely way too skinny. I was wilting away to nothing. I went to the beach that summer and became even sicker.   
 The start of my ninth grade year was when I started to “live” at Children’s Hospital. I was in and out of there for nine long months. I wasn’t able to do too much that year because no matter what I did, I ended up getting sick and passing out. I seriously almost died that year. Scary thought? Yeah I know. I was diagnosed with a swollen gallbladder and an overactive metabolism. I went from one hundred and fifty pounds to ninety pounds those nine months. It was the worst time of my life.   
 Tenth grade year came around and I was still struggling with my sickness. I had an easy schedule which made it nice, but I was hardly in school because I was sick like every other day. I was SAPPED that school year because of my dramatic weight loss. They threatened to take me out of my home and admit me to this weight loss clinic in Oakland. My mom promised me that she would never let them take me away, she kept her word. I ended up going on Ensure to build my mass muscle, gain weight, and get my nutrients back into my body. I survived that and I couldn’t be more grateful.  
 Eleventh grade was my toughest year of school. I had so many hard classes and on top of that, I got a part-time job at Marshalls in Cranberry Township. Juggling a job, school, and babysitting my two little cousins, Blake and Ross, got hard and frustrating at times. I managed to keep my grades up and got on “B Honor Roll”. It sure made my parents proud of me. Junior year was seriously the fastest year ever. At times it feels like I never even took it. That’s how fast it went. That summer was one of the best summers of my life. I spent a lot of my time with Andrew Edwards from Hopewell who is now a freshman at Westminster College. We ended up dating all of summer, but broke up a month after he left for college. I was sad at the time, but now I am perfectly okay with the decision that we both made.   
 Now that I am eighteen years old and a senior at Ambridge Area High School, my life is about to change. I’ve been visiting colleges and also applying to the ones that I absolutely love. I really want to go to Clarion’s Nursing School up in Venango County which is located in Oil City. My dream is to become a pediatrics nurse. That dream came in clear view when I got sick four years ago. I want to be able to give back to the one’s who helped me. My mom and dad aren’t too excited about me leaving home, but they have to let me go sooner or later. I’ll still be around just not sitting there in my bedroom. I’ll be out pursuing my dream which I know I can reach. Either way, I know I’m going to make them proud to be called their daughter.